ShaneQuis Behanan

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Mr. Rush – Mr. Farrell

Gulag – Extra Credit

Arrest:

Stalin left his citizens into a constant life of fear, during his reign over the Soviet Union. Citizens may have committed a petty crime, and once arrested, the accused had no rights to protest their incarceration and no access to a fair trial. Prisoners were either sentenced to death or to years of hard labor in the Gulag. Arrests could happen anywhere, at any time and to anybody in Stalin’s Soviet Union. No Soviet citizen, no matter their power or position, could be certain that they were safe from arrest. Most of the men, women, and children that was imprisoned fell into groups of four. First thing the Gulag did was incarcerated those guilty of any crime such as rape, murder, thievery, or crimes that could be punished in society. A prisoner Margarete Buber Neumann said, “I had been a month in prison now and I was still left in ignorance of the formal reason for my arrest. Apart from leaving the cell with the others for exercise and so on, I had not been outside it except to have my finger-prints taken and to be photographed, but every day from the stories of others I extended my knowledge of the procedure at the questionings, of the charges and the likely sentences. My friends in the cell told me to make up my mind to a charge of espionage at least, and perhaps counter-revolutionary organization as well. ‘But don’t be alarmed,’ they said consolingly. ‘Everyone gets that. When they question you insist that you don’t know anything at all. Stick by that through thick and thin. And, above all, don’t sign anything. It doesn’t matter how long they keep you here; it’s still better than Siberia.’” The trials of the accused were very bias, and extremely mishandled. Some called them the farcical justice of a Soviet trial. The parents, spouses, and children whom prisoners left behind faced a difficult life. The Soviet police operated unpredictably, arresting people not only in the dark of night but also in the light of day. No matter when or where arrest occurred, special trucks outfitted with tiny prison cells hauled the new prisoners to their tormentors in an interrogation prison. This was the end—a death sentence carried out almost immediately.